

TOWN OF MANSFIELD
Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
January 22, 2009

Present: Smith, Knox (acting chair), Hultgren (staff), Walton (staff)

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m.

The minutes of the December 4, 2008 were reviewed.

Walton reported that on January 12, 2009 the Town Council approved the formation of a sustainability committee. The committee will be comprised of representatives from the Board of Ed, Region 19, Planning and Zoning, Town Council, UConn as well as the community, and probably will be working with the Solid Waste Advisory Committee from time to time.

The committee discussed two scenarios for simplifying the single-family service levels. Both scenarios eliminate a bag equivalence for the mini through maxi service levels. Mini-mini service would still use a 13-gallon bag. It was undecided whether the one-can service level should stay at a 35-gallon can (instead of rising to 45 gallon) in order to keep with the philosophy of encouraging less waste. After the other committee members (who were absent) comment on this, a report will be given to Town Council. Hultgren suggested that a public meeting be held after Council's review. Walton will check on whether on-line polling can be done through the Town website.

Although not a common practice, the committee was asked if they thought neighbors sharing trash service should be stopped. The trash collector has left trash behind because of this. The consensus was that it is not a significant problem to share service at this time.

Walton handed out the schedule for the organic land care workshops: Organic Lawns, April 4, 2009 from 9 to 12; Backyard Water Wise, May 2, 2009 from 10 to 11; Backyard Composting, May 16, 2009 from 10 to 11 and a rain barrel sale on June 20, 2009.

Walton reported that eight proposed bills have been submitted so far in this legislative session on some permutation of reducing plastic shopping bags. Representative Denise Merrill and 10 other representatives has submitted proposed bill #5215, which places a five cent fee on plastic bags that will help fund DEP. She also distributed a summary of the bag survey that Sally Millius and family conducted at the local stores. In general, merchants would support an initiative (ban or fee) to reduce bag usage, and they believe that residents would support it.

Walton stated that she is working with UConn to arrange a spring move-out that will be coordinated with an off-campus pilot. Walton contacted the new owners of Hunting Lodge Apartments who are interested, but cautioned about the growing spread of bed bugs. Walton will take this issue back to the next UConn meeting. At that meeting, the group will be working with the organization, Dump and Run, who has successfully worked with several colleges during spring move-outs.

The Solid Waste Advisory Committee has three openings for members. Walton has been unsuccessful in enlisting new members, but will ask Sally Millius if she is interested. Members are encouraged to keep looking for potential participants.

Walton reported that UConn's community outreach program, which participates each spring and fall in litter collections, primarily in the North Eagleville/Hunting Lodge Road corridor, has asked that a representative from the Town be present during the clean-ups. Three spring dates have been lined up – March 21 and 28, April 18 – all from 1 pm to 3 pm. If any committee members are interested in working with the group of student volunteers that day, let Walton know. Otherwise, she is prepared to participate on those Saturdays.

Walton stated that Willimantic Waste Paper is delayed in getting the plastics optical sorter installed; their latest report is that it will be operating in April, but staff will contact them prior to sending out the April bill inserts. The sorter will enable plastics numbered three through seven to be recycled.

It was requested by a resident to offer compact fluorescent bulb collection boxes in areas around town to make it more convenient to dispose of them properly. Northeast Lamp Recycling does have collection boxes that are sealed but they are more expensive. Currently the Town pays 29 cents per bulb. With the prepaid collection boxes, the cost would be 83 cents each for the initial box and 33 cents for replacement boxes. Walton explained to the resident that at this time, the solid waste budget could not accommodate an added expense, but that it would be considered when the budget concerns have been relieved.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2009. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Virginia Walton
Recycling/Refuse Coordinator

Cc: Lon R. Hultgren, Director of Public Works, Members, file, Town Manager, Town Clerk